Canada and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

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Canada, one of the founding members of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program, has contributed financial resources, food and technical experts to both organizations. It is, in fact the seventh-largest contributor to the FAO — after the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, and Italy. Canada's share for the years 1980 and 1981 was $5.4 million (U.S.) a year, or 4.01 per cent of the total budget. Its original contribution in 1946 was $216,500 (U.S.).

Canada is also the second-largest contributor to the World Food Program. Its contribution has risen from $2.3 million (U.S.) a year during the period 1963-65 to $95 million for the years 1981 and 1982.

Canadians serving as FAO experts have come from the federal and provincial civil services and from universities and industry. The scope of their activities is shown in the following examples:

Veterinarians (foot and mouth disease) — Turkey
Home economists (family living programs) — Ghana and Sierra Leone
Grain storage expert — Turkey
Forest industries consultant — Ecuador
Wildlife management expert — Cameroun
Forestry economics expert — Turkey
Instructor (farm broadcasting seminar) — Turkey
Technical officer (range economy) — Kenya
Forestry officer (sawmilling) — Malaysia
Animal production officer (livestock improvement) — Kenya
Nutritionist — Swaziland
Agricultural officer (applied physiology) — Arab Republic of Egypt
Fisheries officer (vessel and gear) — Barbados
Animal production officer (animal nutrition) — Iran
Technical officer (soil and water management) — Iran
Technical officer (plant nutrition—fertilizer use) — Malaysia
Nutrition officer (education and training) — Sri Lanka
Home economics officer — Nigeria
Animal production officer (dairy cattle husbandry) — Iraq
Nutrition officer (fruit and vegetable technology) — Greece
Technical officer (dry farming) — Tunisia
Land water management specialist — India

Canadians have also served on such FAO bodies as: Panel of Experts on Integrated Pest Control; Working Party of Experts on Pesticide Residues; Seminar on Experts to Advise on Soil Map of the World Project; Expert Panel of Nutrition; Advisory

Committee on Marine Resources Research; Advisory Committee on Forestry Education; FAO-WHO Expert Group on Vitamin Requirements.

Canada continues to be active both in its support of the FAO and in its participation in the organization. It has been a member of the Council, the Committee on Commodity Problems, the Fisheries Committee, the Subcommittee on Surplus Disposal, and the Group on Grains since their inception. It has also participated in the study groups on fats and oils, bananas and hard fibres, as well as in groups involved in food-standard work.

Canadians have chaired the FAO Conference and the UN-FAO World Food Program Pledging Conference, the Intergovernmental Committee of the World Food Program, the Fisheries Committee, and the Committee on Commodity Problems. They have also served as first vice-chairman of the Council, chairman of the Finance Committee, chairman or vice-chairman of the North American Forestry Commission, and chairmen of various working parties.

Purpose of FAO

The FAO serves agriculture: by encouraging the growth, development and use of essential information, science and research; by bringing together government officials and policy-makers for consultations leading to international action and arrangements to encourage improved agricultural production practices and to facilitate world business in agriculture. The work of the FAO includes assisting governments in:

(a) the establishment of planning machinery;
(b) the training of personnel;
(c) the formulation, improvement and implementation of development plans;
(d) the determination of guide-lines for agricultural policy that take account of resource potentialities and export possibilities;
(e) the formulation of food standards and plant and animal protection measures.

Essentially, the entire operation is aimed at transferring knowledge and techniques to nearly 100 developing countries, to enable them to plan rationally, to regulate their economic and social environment, and to build up trained cadres of their own. Many difficulties must be overcome before these techniques can be perfected.

History

Until 1945, when the FAO — one of the 14 Specialized Agencies of the United Nations — was established, no concerted international effort had been exerted against world-wide hunger.

Participants at an international conference on food and agriculture in Hot Springs, Virginia in 1943, took the initial action toward the creation of the FAO by setting up an interim commission to draft a specific plan for a permanent organization concerned with food and agriculture. It was not until October 16, 1945, in Quebec City however, that the FAO was formally created. Temporary headquarters were first established at Washington, D.C. and in 1951, the organization moved into its present permanent headquarters in Rome.

In 1945, the FAO constitution was signed by 42 governments. By 1960, FAO membership had risen to 81, and in 1967 there were 116 member nations and three associate members. At the end of 1981, the membership totalled 147 member nations.

Currently staff employed by the FAO under both permanent and fixed-term appointments number 4,490. Of these 1,640 are in the professional and higher categories and 2,850 in the general service category. The FAO's annual budget increased from $5 million in 1946 to $278.7 million in 1980-81. Total expenditures increased even more rapidly as the FAO received funds from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Freedom from Hunger campaign and various joint activities with other UN agencies.

Organization

The FAO is divided into seven major departments: Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Economics and Social Policy, Development, Administration and Finance, and General Affairs and Information. In addition, there are seven regional offices, one each for Africa, Asia and the Far East, Latin America, the Near East, Europe, North America and the UN/New York.

From the beginning, the FAO has served as the organizing and co-ordinating agency that brought together representatives of national governments and scientific bodies to review and exchange information, to study problems of common interest and to plan action programs within the whole range of food and agriculture, including nutrition, forestry and fisheries. The central body of activities conducted in response to this assignment of duties and responsibilities is known as the FAO's regular program. The program of activities, services and projects for each year is determined by the FAO conference.

The regular program is financed by annual payments from member nations. The amount of these payments is established in accordance with the scale of contributions determined by the conference. This scale of contributions, as for other organizations in the UN family, is derived from the UN scale of assessments. It

is based on a formula that takes into consideration a number of factors such as gross national product, population, standard of living, etc., and so recognizes the wide differences in the ability of different nations to pay the costs of conducting the FAO's program. The assessment of each member nation is expressed as a percentage of the whole budget. Field activities are financed by the UNDP and other trust funds.

The task assigned to the FAO by its member nations, as described in the preamble to its constitution, includes raising levels of nutrition and securing improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of all food and agricultural products, with particular reference to improving the condition of rural populations. Since most of the population in developing countries is rural, the developing world looks primarily to the FAO as a most important instrument for the fulfilment of its development objectives.

Functions

Article I of the FAO's constitution defines the functions of the organization as follows:

(1) It shall collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture. In the constitution, the term 'agriculture' includes fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products.

(2) It shall promote and, where appropriate, recommend national and international action with respect to:

(a) scientific, technological, social and economic research on nutrition, food and agriculture;
(b) the improvement of education and administration relating to nutrition, food and agriculture, and the spread of public knowledge of nutritional and agricultural science and practice;
(c) the conservation of natural resources and the adoption of improved methods of agricultural production;
(d) the improvement of the processing, marketing and distribution of food and agricultural products;
(e) the adoption of policies for the provision of adequate credit, national and international;
(f) the adoption of international policies respecting agricultural commodity arrangements.

(3) The FAO shall also:

(a) furnish technical assistance asked for by governments;
(b) organize, in co-operation with the governments concerned,

such missions as may be needed to assist them in fulfilling the obligations arising from their acceptance of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture and of the FAO constitution.

Implementation of programs
The methods employed by the FAO must be those that are most effective in assisting governments in performing their own functions, and the organization cannot assume the responsibilities of governments for carrying out those functions. Thus, the FAO's methods are designed to meet these conditions and include the following:

(1) provision of international forums;

(2) preparation and publication of technical bulletins, books and policy papers;

(3) the holding of technical and economic meetings;

(4) the sending of survey missions to study the needs of countries;

(5) the sending of individual experts or groups of experts to countries.

Field programs
When the FAO was set up at the end of the Second World War, many people thought that international exchange of knowledge alone was the answer to world food and agricultural problems. The belief was, that with a little technical information provided by a world centre, any country could solve its own problems.

During the past two decades, there has been a significant reorientation in the FAO's role in assisting developing countries. From being solely an advisory body, the FAO has also become an operational organization assisting countries in preparing development plans, helping to execute major projects, providing some of the backing for these projects and aiding countries in obtaining finance for the largest projects of national development.

This change in approach became possible at the end of 1950 with the establishment of the United Nations Expanded Program of Technical Assistance (EPTA). Since the development of agriculture is the main concern of most developing countries, it was inevitable that a major part should be carried out by the FAO.

UNDP is the chief partner in the FAO's field activities. It emerged from the EPTA, under which the FAO spent $1.4 million in 1951 to provide 53 experts to 38 countries with vari-

ous development problems. In 1979, the FAO spent $129 million in UNDP funds on field programs.

Trust funds from individual governments pay for a growing part of the FAO's field programs. These arrangements fall into two main classes. Under one class, some developing countries pay to the FAO the money needed to finance some part of their own national development programs. Under the other and larger class, developed countries channel a proportion of their bilateral aid funds through the FAO.

The Associate Expert Scheme, which is another form of bilateral aid channelled through the FAO, was started in 1954 with an agreement that well-qualified young people could assist FAO experts in the field. By the end of 1979 there were 381 associate experts working with the FAO. In 1978, the total cost of this activity was $11.4 million.

Volunteers in field programs is also a method employed by the FAO. In fact, it was the first UN Specialized agency to introduce volunteers into its field projects on an official and systematic basis. By June 1967, agreement had been reached with 12 sponsoring organizations. From 1965 to 1972, over 700 volunteers carried out two-year assignments on FAO projects, working under the technical supervision of FAO field experts. Previous bilateral arrangements are now being replaced by assignments under the United Nations Volunteer Program, which by the end of 1978 had supplied 89 volunteers to the FAO.

The FAO *Investment Centre* helps governments to identify, prepare and evaluate projects for financing by the various investment agencies with which the FAO is linked through co-operative programs. The largest of these programs is with the World Bank Group — the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). Similar co-operative arrangements with regional banks have helped in increasing lending for agricultural development.

The *World Food Program* is a co-operative undertaking by the UN and the FAO that uses food supplies contributed by 118 donors including 70 developing countries, as a backing for long-term social development and also for emergency relief. Food aid may be given as an incentive in self-help and settlement programs, as part wages in labour-intensive development projects or as support for school and other institutional feeding programs. The World Food Program started operations in January 1963, and by 1980 more than 20 million people were benefiting from its aid. Most were workers and the families of workers, building roads, digging irrigation channels, planting new forests and doing other public

works. Others were infants, mothers and students benefiting from various health and education projects. Up to the end of 1978, 942 projects had been approved in 108 countries for a total commitment of $3,331 million, and 410 emergency operations in 94 countries had cost $416 million.

The *Freedom from Hunger Action for Development Campaign* was started in 1960 to create a world awareness of the severity of the food problem and to stimulate understanding of the fundamental causes of under-development. Substantial funds have been contributed by private individuals and citizen groups. These funds have increasingly been spent on self-help projects aimed at showing the people of the developing countries how much they can do to improve their own circumstances.

The *FAO Industry Co-operative Program* helps countries to draw up projects that are likely to gain support from private industry and helps to bring investors into projects at the drafting stage. The program, established in 1966, is supported by fees paid by approximately 90 member companies.

To sum up, the primary aim of the FAO's field program is to help governments to prepare their national development programs to make the most effective use of limited resources and to help build up national forces to deal with all the problems of development.

Commodity policies

The Quebec Conference of 1945 gave the FAO broad responsibilities in the economic policy field. Over the years, the FAO has provided the forum for governments to consider a world food board and an international commodity clearing-house. Member countries of the FAO organized a Committee on Commodity Problems and a host of commodity study groups covering grains, fats and oils, rice, tea, oilseeds, meat, jute and hard fibres, citruses, cocoa and bananas. The FAO and its member governments worked out the principles of surplus disposal that provided guidelines for surplus disposal of agricultural products in a manner that minimized damage to commercial trade. It spelled out the guiding principles for stabilization of farm products. These principles were also an attempt to provide guidelines to member countries, to make sure the price support legislation in one country was not at the expense of farmers in another.

Canada recognizes the role of the FAO. It also acknowledges the need of the FAO to be flexible, to adapt itself to changing conditions and to meet new challenges. Canada's contribution has matched the growing responsibilities of the FAO in the war against hunger and in the struggle to attain freedom from want.